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IV. SATURA REDIVIVA.

According to Livy,¹ the purpose of the first Roman approaches to drama was apotropaic. To drive away pestilence, the Romans naturally had recourse to their great masters in magic, the Etruscans. To gain an idea of the symbolic dances introduced by the imported *histriones*, we have only to recall the paintings of many an Etruscan tomb—for example, the Grotta del Triclinio at Corneto.

Livy then explains that the Roman youth “began to imitate” this Etruscan rite. The imitation cannot have been close; for the Roman ceremony was combined with recitation, whereas the fundamental characteristic of the Etruscan performance had been that *carmina* were entirely lacking.

This recitation was humorous and gestures which served to emphasize the humorous element were added.² Furthermore, the “verses” of the young men do not seem to have been set to music. Livy says carefully “*iocularia fundentes*

¹ 7, 2. For the sake of clearness, it may perhaps be well to quote in full the passages pertinent to my discussion.

3 . . . cum uis morbi nec humanis consiliis nec ope diuina leuaretur, . . . ludi quoque scaenici . . . inter alia caelestis irae placamina instituti dicuntur.

4. ceterum parua quoque, ut ferme principia omnia, et ea ipsa peregrina res fuit. sine carmine ullo, sine imitandorum carminum actu ludiones, ex Etruria acciti, ad tibicinis modos saltantes haud indecoros motus more Tusco dabant.

5. imitari deinde eos iuuentus simul inconditis inter se iocularia fundentes versibus coepere, nec absoni a voce motus erant.

6. accepta itaque res saepiusque usurpando excitata. vernaculis artificibus, quia ister Tusco verbo ludio vocabatur, nomen histrionibus inditum;

7. qui non, sicut ante, Fescennino versu similem incompositum temere ac rudem alternis iaciebant, sed inpletas modis saturas descripto iam ad tibicinem cantu motuque congruenti peragebant.

² Livy does not imply, as Ullman thought (C. Ph. IX 2 and 3), that the *iocularia* were intended to burlesque the Etruscan performance. Rather, as *simul* (Par. 5) shows, the *iocularia* and their attendant *motus* were coincident with the dance, but not a part of the imitation.

versibus," and later (Par. 7), in describing a subsequent development, he remarks, "descripto *iam* ad tibicinem cantu", which certainly implies that the previous "chant" had not been "arranged for the flute-accompaniment".¹

The phrase "nec absoni a uoce motus erant" (Par. 5) is a curious one for Livy to use in describing the gestures of the *iuuentus*. *Nec absoni* is not at all a simple litotes for *congruentes*, but as Ullman² has seen, is intended to contrast with the "haud indecoros motus" of the Etruscans. Livy indeed seems guardedly to be expressing his disapproval of the comic element in the young men's performance; that is, he, or his source, did not comprehend its prophylactic purpose.

Noticeable also is the fact that although Livy shows that he regards the *iocularia* and the *motus* as a separate ceremony which the Romans combined with the dance of the Etruscans, he does not state that this ceremony had ever had a prior existence. Here the account of Valerius Maximus is of the greatest importance, for it fortunately enables us to fill the gaps of Livy's narrative.

According to Valerius,³ "placandi caelestis numinis gratia compositis carminibus vacuas aures prae-buit . . . uerum, ut est mos hominum paruula initia pertinaci studio prosequendi, uenerabilibus erga Deos uerbis iuuentus rudi atque in-composito motu corporum iocabunda gestus adiecit, eaque res ludium ex Etruria arcessendi causam dedit: cuius decora pernicitas . . . nouitate grata Romanorum oculos permulsit."

Here we have what was doubtless the original rite: a solemn

¹ Cf. Weissenborn's comment on 7, 2, 7:—"Von diesen rohen Versuchen, . . . sind die von L. im folgenden beschriebenen Versuche verschieden durch ihren Inhalt, dadurch dass sie mit Gesang verbunden waren . . ."

Interpret *iam* as equivalent to *tandem* (cf. Ter. And. 1, 2, 19; Tac. Ann. 2, 21, and *iam tandem* in Livy 22, 12, 10). This is apparently the interpretation of Hendrickson (A. J. P., XV, 12).

² L. c.

³ 2, 4, 4. Valerius has been strangely neglected by writers on the *satura*, who usually regard him as a mere paraphraser of Livy. The "Programm" of Orendi (M. Terentius Varro, die Quelle zu Livius VII. 2, Bistritz, 1891) should have corrected this impression, if indeed a glance at the texts in question were not sufficient. This Knapp has seen (A. J. P., XXXIII, 125, footnote).

carmen to avert the anger of the gods as shown in the pestilence. This chant the young men subjected to ridicule.¹

One point in the narrative calls for special comment. *iocabunda* has uniformly, I think, been regarded as feminine and taken with *iuventus*.² But Orendi's paper has created at least a strong presumption in favor of the theory that Livy and Valerius in their descriptions of the rise of the drama on Roman soil are following a common source. Valerius, however, begins logically with the original rite which, he informs us, the young men turned to ridicule; whereas Livy, by omitting these antecedent stages, is forced, as Ullman³ observed with surprise, to start his narrative by recording what the performance of the Etruscans was *not* like ("sine carmine ullo", etc.). With Valerius, the contribution of the *iuventus* preceded the introduction of the Etruscan dancers; Livy, on the other hand, describes the combination of the *iocularia* with the imported performance. But if in this reference, Livy, as Orendi has plausibly argued, is following (though at this point less accurately⁴) the same source which Valerius used in writing his fuller account, then Valerius's *iocabunda* is parallel to Livy's *iocularia* and is therefore neuter.⁵

¹ We may compare the mocking parodies of proud boasts which we find in the triumph-song quoted by Suetonius, Caes. 49.

² To make sense, editors have been forced to odd translations. The editor of the Delphin edition paraphrases,—"iuuentus ludens verbis in Deorum honorem compositis." Michaut (Tréteaux latins, Paris 1912, p. 55) says, "la jeunesse, qui prend plaisir aux danses rustiques et désordonnées." That both these translations are incorrect is apparent from the examples quoted by Draeger (Historische Syntax I, 357), who cites accusatives, genitives and datives following adjectives in *-bundus*, but no ablatives. Orendi (p. 13) paraphrases, "Die Jugend, die selbst bei ernstesten Gelegenheiten den Scherz nicht missen kann", which is surely making *iocabunda* do a hard day's work.

³ Op. cit., p. 9. Ullman gives a different explanation for this peculiar order.

⁴ In the account of the *saturnalia*, on the contrary, Livy is of course far less abbreviated and inaccurate than Valerius.

⁵ Two difficulties complicate this interpretation. First, the asyndeton (*iocabunda gestus*). This may be classified under the head of the *asyndeton enumeratiuum* of Draeger (II 193; cf. Livy 10, 4, 2 and 32, 3, 5, etc.). Second, in the Latin accessible to us, adjectives in *-bundus* are, so far as I can discover, not used as neuter substantives, though

Assuming this view to be correct, one may compare with the *iocularia* the parodies of the Catholic liturgy which formed a part of the mediaeval Festival of Fools.¹ One may also instance the burlesque of tragedy which a certain type of satyr-drama presented. This last example is especially suggestive, inasmuch as the *exodia*, which Livy (7, 2, 11) tells us were direct descendants of the *iocularia*, were also often travesties of tragedies.²

But we have still to deal with the usual interpretation of *iocabunda* as feminine. Granting that this is correct, we must acknowledge a divergence between Livy and Valerius and admit the possibility that Valerius's account may be more accurate. In this case we must infer that the young men repeated the solemn words of the *carmen*, adding gestures which to the writer who described the performance made the ceremony ridiculous.

Here we may find analogies in many an "expulsion of evils" among primitive people.³ For example, among the Hos of Togoland the town is cleansed of evils by an elaborate procedure⁴ in the course of which "the women sweep out their houses and hearths and set the sweepings on broken wooden plates. Many put on torn mats or torn clothes. . . . While they do so, they pray, saying, 'All ye sicknesses which are in our body and plague us, we are come this day to cast you out!' When they set out so to do, the priest commands every man to cry out thrice and thereby to smite himself on

neuters in agreement are common enough (e. g. *moribunda* (*membra*), Verg. Aen. 6, 732; *errabunda* (*vestigia*), Ecl. 6, 58; *errabundum* (*agmen*), Curt. 8, 4, 6; *cunctabunda* (*uerba*) Mamert. in Jul. 18, 6). Cooper (Word Formation in the Roman Sermo Plebeius, New York, 1895, p. 93) points out that such adjectives are specially characteristic of archaic Latin. Can Valerius from whom Cooper quotes only one other adjective of this formation, be borrowing *iocabunda*, directly or indirectly, from an archaic account? Livy, though he liked adjectives in *-bundus*, was possibly reluctant to employ the neuter substantive of this formation, which was certainly rare in the Latin of his day.

¹ Frazer, Golden Bough, Part VI, The Scapegoat (1913), p. 335.

² Dieterich, Pulcinella, p. 110; Marx in Pauly-Wissowa, Bd. II, p. 1920; but cf. Skutsch in Pauly-Wissowa, Bd. VI, p. 1688.

³ Frazer op. cit., chs. III ff.

⁴ Frazer p. 207. For a Roman parallel, cf. Ovid Fasti, 5, 431 ff., the description of the ritual used at the Lemuria.

the mouth. In a moment they all cry out, smite themselves on the mouth, and run as fast as their legs can carry them in the direction of Mount Adaklu. As they run, they say, 'Out to-day! Out to-day! What kills anybody, out to-day! Ye evil spirits, out to-day!' " etc.¹

If then by the *iocularia* Livy refers inaccurately to the verses of the *carmen* illustrated by 'humorous' gestures, we can perhaps understand why he uses (Par. 7) the phrase "*Fescennino versu similem (versum)*" in referring to them. In form the *carmen* would be similar to the *versus Fescennini*, and its intent was obviously identical; but in substance its words would be serious, not ridiculous like the mockery of the ordinary Fescennines.

At any rate, whether the young men travestied the *carmen* by gestures merely or by words also,² their performance was surely not intended to make sacred things ridiculous, but to increase the magic power of the incantation.

Valerius, like Livy, does not approve; and, like Livy, he contrasts the rude pantomime of the *iuventus* with the graceful dance of the Etruscans. He misunderstands as completely

¹ For a charm against pestilence which may give us an idea of the *carmen* used in Rome, cf. Marcellus Empiricus 15, 11 (see Norden, *Antike Kunstprosa* (1909), p. 821, and Heim, *Incantamenta magica* in *Fleckeisen's Jahrb. Suppl.* 19 (1893), 465 ff.):

si hodie nata—si ante nata
 si hodie creata—si ante creata
 hanc pestem—hanc pestilentiam
 hunc dolorem—hunc tumorem—hunc ruborem
 has toles—has tosillas
 hanc strumam—hanc strumellam
 hanc religionem
 evoco educo excanto
 de istis membris medullis.

² One may reconcile Valerius and Livy by supposing the procedure to have been somewhat as follows: First, a solemn chant by responsive choruses, one composed of priests, the other of young men who added symbolic gestures. For a parallel I may quote Vergil *Aen.* 8, 287 and Servius ad loc. These gestures tended to make the ritual ridiculous, and later on a joking verbal parody of the *carmen* enhanced their effect and ultimately replaced the original solemn formula. Cf. Orendi, op. cit. p. 37.

as Psellus misunderstands what he regards as wantonly obscene elements in the Mysteries.¹

Valerius's narrative is in some degree confirmed by Plutarch² who, quoting Cluvius Rufus, affirms that actors performed in Rome before the coming of the Etruscans.

* * * * *

Since the young men were either parodying a serious incantation or repeating it with illustrative gestures, we must, to obtain an idea of its nature, recall the character of the very earliest Italic *carmina*, perhaps a sort of poetic prose such as is found in the inscription from Corfinium,³ the prayer of Cato (de agr. cult. c. 141) and the Carmen devotionis Decii (Livy 8, 9, 6). For as Thulin⁴ has proved, such poetic prose was peculiarly characteristic of recitation the object of which was religious.

The next stage, neglected by Valerius, is described by Livy. Now the recitation was set to music ("descripto iam ad tibicinem cantu"), for these performances were *saturae*, which, as several interpreters have seen,⁵ Livy defines as *impletae modis*.

The meaning of the phrase has perplexed commentators. Webb⁶ suggests 'metrical throughout' or preferably, 'containing a variety of measures.' Ullman⁷ says, "*modis* can refer only to the rhythmical strains of the flute."

May not both be correct? Once granting the probability that the prayer and the parody were not poetry but rhythmical prose, because not composed for dance-music, we can see that the addition of a flute-accompaniment, introduced originally for the Etruscan dance, would lead the chant gradually ("ad saturarum modos *perrepsit*," says Valerius) from poetic prose

¹ Cf. Psellus, Quenam sunt Graecorum opiniones de daemonibus, 3 (Migne), and Miss Harrison's comment (Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion, pp. 569 f. and notes).

² Aetia Romana, 107.

³ Thurneysen in Rheinisches Museum für Philologie XLIII, p. 349.

⁴ Italische Sakrale Poesie und Prosa, Berlin, 1906, p. 74; also Norden, Kunstprosa, pp. 156 ff.

⁵ Birt, Zwei politische Satiren des alten Rom, Marburg, 1888, p. 17, n. 2; Webb, Origin of Roman Satire, C. Ph. VII (1912), p. 184.

⁶ p. 183.

⁷ Op. cit., p. 7.

to alliterative poetry.¹ By "impletae modis" Livy implies that to the original recitative-prose of the incantation and parody were added selections in metre, intended to be sung (*modis*="measures"); thus the original was "filled up", "enlarged" (*impletae*) by passages in metre sung to the music of the flute (*modis*).²

Here one may draw a striking parallel from the mediaeval church. The Epistles and the Lessons at Mass were sometimes 'farced' (*cum farsura*), that is a *tropus* was inserted in the Lesson or Epistle. A *tropus* or trope was an interpolated chant either in Latin or in the vernacular. Earlier tropes were "rough, rugged, sometimes merely rhythmical, but sometimes metrical: in the second (epoch), . . . the merely rhythmical prose disappeared, the verse became more polished and characterised by rhyme or assonance."³ Was not the result a *satura*?

One is tempted to continue the parallel, to point out that such 'farced' epistles often like Livy's *iocularia* gave rise to

¹ Cf. Thulin, loc. cit.:—"Die Grenze zw. Poesie u. Prosa dürfen wir nicht zu streng ziehen. Es gibt ein Gebiet in dem die beiden sich sehr nahe berührten, nämlich das der sakralen Literatur. Ihre beiden Erscheinungsformen, der Saturnische Vers u. die gegliederte Prosa, entsprechen wohl den beiden priesterlichen Funktionen, dem Gesang (ev. Tanz) u. der feierlichen Recitation."

² I do not think, with Ullman (p. 10), that *peragebant* implies that the singing in the *satura* was continuous, not responsive. It signifies rather that there was no reversion to the earlier form;—the performance was consistently a medley of prose and verse. Thus, I take the sense of the passage to be, 'but gave a consistent performance of *saturae*, that is compositions enlarged by the addition of metrical passages in which, in contrast to the original *carmen* and the *iocularia*, (*iam*) the chant and its illustrative gestures were arranged for flute-accompaniment'.

My hypothesis may perhaps draw additional support from an interesting passage in Macrobius (Saturn. 3, 14, 9), who tells us that Cato said of a man to whom he applied the epithets '*Spatiator*' and '*Fescennius*': "Praeterea cantat, ubi collibuit, interdum Graecos versus agit, *iocos dicit* (perhaps a comic prose recitation), voces demutat (i. e., the style changes, the metrical element appears?), *staticulos dat* (accompanied by dancing)".

³ The Winchester Troper, ed. W. H. Frere (Henry Bradshaw Society, 1894), p. xiii; see also E. K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, Oxford, 1903, I, p. 277 and note 3; II, pp. 7 ff.

irreverence¹ and that from certain tropes in dialogue form sprang the liturgical drama.

I return, however, to the ancient *satura*. To Schanz's objection,² "Es ist unmöglich, dass Gesang und Tanz erst später hinzukamen," the specimens of prayers which Thulin quotes are sufficient answer. Recitative prose and rude poetry lay close together; on both sides of the dividing line were *carmina*; music and especially dancing formed the bridge; but Roman conservatism kept in the *satura* the older form of the prayer,³ side by side with the metrical additions which arose spontaneously after the Etruscan dance was combined with the older ritual.

If such was the nature of the early *satura*,⁴ we can understand why Varro gave the title *satura* to his Menippeans marked by a mixture of prose and verse,⁵ and we may even, as Hirzel remarks in a suggestive note,⁶ trace this characteristic of the work of Menippus back to a similar mixture in early Greek comedy.

That a medley of forms was long considered essential to the *satura* may help to explain the reluctance of Horace to refer to his hexameters as *saturae*. At times, however, Horace deftly contrives to suggest a contrast like that between the commonplaces of prose and the lofty flights of poetry. Compare, for instance, in the Journey the excellent comic effect of lines of almost epic quality inserted in a passage purposely prosaic:⁷ "Hic ego propter aquam, quod erat deterrima, ventri Indico bellum, cenantis haud animo aequo

¹ See on this subject the words of Eudes, archbishop of Rheims in 1250 (*Revue des langues romanes* II (1871), p. 133).

² *Röm. Litteraturges.* VIII, 1, 1 (3d. ed.), p. 21.

³ And, if Livy is correct, of the parody.

⁴ This interpretation of *impletae modis* I had obtained from consideration of the forms of ancient Italic *carmina*. I subsequently discovered that Van Wageningen in the prolegomena to his edition of Persius (1911), p. vii, had conjectured that *impletae modis* might refer to a combination of metrical passages with prose-recitation. As he gives no evidence to support his conjecture, I have thought that my own treatment might not be unjustifiable.

⁵ I am presupposing that Jerome cites Varro's titles correctly, cf. Webb, *C. Ph.* VII (1912), p. 180.

⁶ *Der Dialog*, Leipzig, 1895, I, p. 381.⁴

⁷ *Sat.* I, 5, 7 ff.

Exspectans comites. *iam nox inducere terris Umbras et caelo diffundere signa parabat*: Tum pueri nautis, pueris convicia nautae Ingerere."

Such a contrast in form might be employed to tickle the ears of an anxious crowd as the recitative passed, under the influence of flute and dance, to metrical invocation; it could compel a sluggish auditor to heed the exhortations of a ragged Cynic, and it could mark the sublimest heights of the Vita Nuova.

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